

2.16 Firing Point Upgrades, YTA

USAG-AK has proposed to construct one new firing point (Figure 28) and to upgrade firing points (FPs) 11, 12 and 13 (Figure 29) within the Yukon Training Area (YTA). All three of the FPs to be upgraded are located along the north side of Brigadier Road. FPs 11 and 12 have not previously undergone any clearing activity within their designated boundaries for the purpose of creating a usable FP. Clearing has occurred, however, anywhere from 30 meters to 50 meters from the edge of Brigadier Road for other purposes. FP 13 has previously had some clearing done. Proposed upgrades at all three FPs would involve clearing of vegetation, earth moving, and installation of a hardened pad for equipment, vehicles and personnel. Additionally, a new firing point and access road is proposed for construction along the east side of Skyline Road. There has been some disturbance in the vicinity of Skyline Road (approximately 30-50 meters from the edge of the road), but little along the ridge that is proposed for the FP and access road construction. The purpose of these projects is to provide additional firing points into the Stuart Creek Impact Area to increase troop training options within the Yukon Training Area. The proposed FP upgrades are located on map quadrangle XBD C5, T. 3 S., R.6 E., Section 26 (FP 11) and T.3 S., R.7 E., Sections 17 and 18 (FP 12) and T.3 S., R.7 E., Section 9 (FP 13). The proposed FP construction is located on map quadrangle XBD C6, T. 2 S., R. 5 E., Section 36.

Survey and Inventory

In June 2005 USAG-AK cultural resources staff reviewed the proposed project and the existing literature on cultural resources within the Yukon Training Area. In June, July and August of 2005 the proposed firing point and three firing point upgrades were pedestrian surveyed by a crew of four to five archaeologists employed by the Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands (CEMML, Colorado State University).

Parallel pedestrian transects spaced at 20 meters or less were walked in all areas that were not deemed too wet or too steep ($>40^\circ$) to contain cultural material. Systematic sub-surface testing was undertaken in areas determined to be high probability (e.g., lake margins, ridges, benches adjacent to steeper slopes) during initial review of the proposed project area, and as determined by the supervising archaeologist and field crew leader based on survey findings. In addition to pedestrian transects, 40cm x 40cm shovel tests were excavated throughout the project areas. None of the shovel tests excavated contained any cultural material.

Transects and shovel testing did not identify any archaeological materials. Several foxholes and the remains of previous recent training operations, such as food and beverage cans and miscellaneous trash, were scattered throughout the FP project areas.

Cultural Resources

There is one known site located in the vicinity of the proposed firing point construction project on Skyline Road. There is also one known site located in the vicinity of the FP 11 upgrades. Both of these sites are located outside of the project areas and have previously been determined not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

XBD-00093

Latitude:

Longitude: -146° 40' 50"W (NAD 27)
Determination: Not Eligible

This site consists of one coarse grained beige chert flake found on the surface of Skyline Road along a ridge top portion of the road (Holmes 1979). Pedestrian survey and shovel testing at various times produced no additional artifacts. This finding suggests that XMH-00093 is an isolated find. The site area may have been larger at one time, prior to the clearing of the road and pull-off areas in the vicinity of where the artifact was located. This site has been determined not eligible for the National Register in 1984 and 2005.

XBD-00260

Latitude:
Longitude: (NAD27)
Determination: Not Eligible

This site consists of an isolated find of a fine grained, black basalt unifacial scraper found on the surface of Brigadier Road in the Yukon Training Area. This artifact was found on a steep road surface and likely eroded out of deposits further up slope or was transported to the area as fill for road construction. This site was determined not eligible for the National Register in 2004.

Results

No cultural resources were identified within the project areas for the firing point construction or upgrades at firing points 11, 12 and 13. All previously-recorded archaeological sites and historic properties in the Yukon Training Area fall outside the project areas. USAG-AK has determined that no historic properties will be affected by the proposed projects.

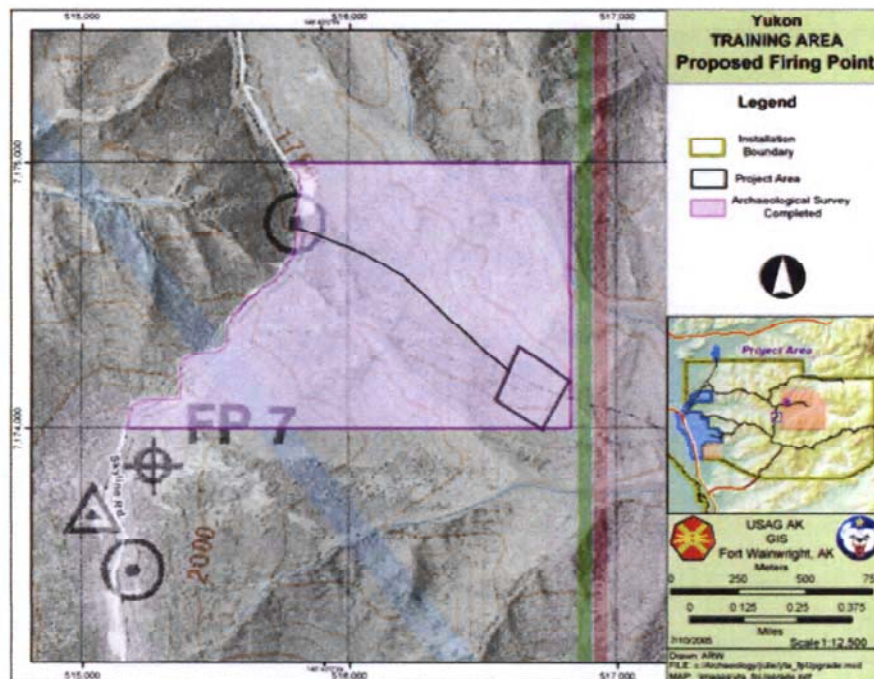


Figure 28. Map showing proposed firing point along Skyline Road

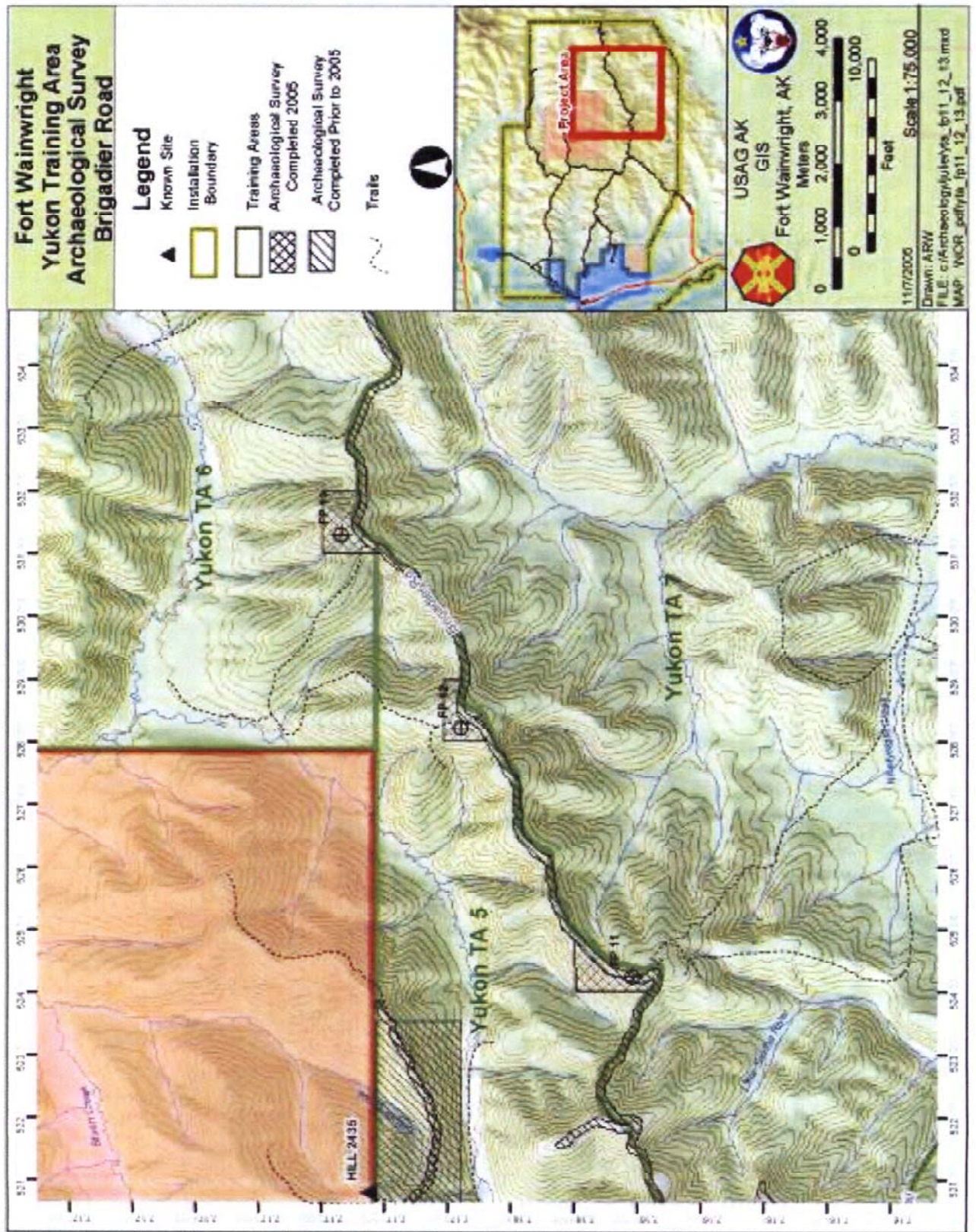


Figure 29. Map showing firing points 11, 12 and 13